



United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service



PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION

Restoring, Enhancing and Sustaining Forests in California, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands

Sierra National Forest

KINGS RIVER SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA High Sierra Ranger District

Welcome to the Kings River Special Management Area. Congress has given special designation to this area to enhance its recreational opportunities. It is located two hours east of Fresno in the upper Kings River canyon. The Special Management Area (SMA) includes 49,000 acres within the Sierra and Sequoia National Forests. It is the third such area nationwide to be given special recognition and protection. The other two special management areas are Lake Tahoe Basin and Mono Lake. Noteworthy characteristics of the SMA include a wild trout fishery, Garlic Falls, and the Boole Tree, which is the largest Sequoia tree found in any National Forest in the United States.

RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The SMA offers a wide variety of recreational opportunities:

- **Camping:** There are four developed campgrounds all located along the Kings River. They are Kirch Flat, Mill Flat, Camp 4, and Camp 41/2. Tables, restrooms, and grills are provided. Drinking water is not available. These campgrounds are free of charge and are first-come, first-served. There are four designated group camping areas: Green Cabin Flat, Bear Wallow, and Gravel Flat. There is no fee, however, a permit is required for groups exceeding 25 people. Kirch Flat is the fourth group campground and can accommodate up to 50 people. One can reserve the group site through a lottery system by contacting the High Sierra Ranger District.
- **Hiking:** The most popular trail in the area is the Kings River Trail. This National Recreation Trail begins on the north side of the
- Kings River at the end of Garnet Dike Road. It follows the river east for three miles to Spring Creek, ascends northeast to Garlic Meadow Creek, and continues to Rough Creek.
- Bear Wallow interpretive trail is also located on the north side of the Kings River. Interpretive signs provide information on: Cultural heritage, wildflowers, grasses, California Mule Deer migration, Blue Oak Woodland and a description of the scenic overlook. The trail is approximately 2 miles long and gradually climbs the foothill slopes. John Muir Wilderness, Monarch Wilderness, Kings Canyon National Park and the Kings River area all on display at the beautiful scenic overlook.
- On the south side of the river, another trail begins at Mill Flat Creek and follows the Kings River upstream 5 miles to Converse Creek. The summer months are generally very hot at this altitude, therefore, spring and fall offer a more pleasurable hike.
- **Wild Trout Fishery:** The Kings River, from Pine Flat upstream to the confluence of South and Middle Forks; South Fork upstream to the highway crossing at Boyden Cave and Middle Fork upstream to the western boundary of Kings Canyon National Park, is managed exclusively for its wildstrain, stream-bred trout without any supplemental domestic stocking. To protect this fishery, the following regulations are in force: trout limit is **zero** (no trout may be taken), and only artificial flies or lures, with barbless hook may be used.



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WHITEWATER RAFTING

The Kings River offers an enjoyable 10 mile rafting run from Garnet Dike to Kirch Flat Campground, with rapids graded as Class III and IV. The rafting season is usually from late April to mid-July. The highest water generally is in late May through early June.

The Winfrey Mine (Hermit's Hole) and Garnet Dike put-ins are located about 63 miles east of Fresno. Access is via Belmont Avenue in Fresno, east toward Pine Flat Reservoir. Belmont turns into Trimmer Springs Road one mile past the town of Piedra. Stay on Trimmer Springs Road until you reach Kirch Flat Campground at the east end of the reservoir. Here, you will cross the Kings River on a concrete bridge, and then again on a metal bridge. After crossing the metal bridge, turn right and follow the dirt road up the river. The Winfrey Mine put-in is 7 miles upstream on this road from the metal bridge. The Garnet Dike put-in is 8 miles upstream from the metal bridge.

RAFTING COMPANIES

Three commercial rafting companies offer guided rafting trips on the Kings River with base camps set up in the Kirch Flat area. The companies are:

- Kings River Expeditions (800) 846-3674.
(www.kingsriver.com)
- Whitewater Voyages (800) 400-Raft.
(www.whitewatervoyages.com)
- Zephyr River Expeditions (800) 431-3636.
(www.zrafting.com)

At this time, these three companies are the only commercial rafting companies permitted to guide on the Kings River. It is not anticipated that other commercial permits will be issued.

CAMPING AT RAFTING PUT-IN POINTS IS PROHIBITED DURING RAFTING SEASON

For more information:

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